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## Addressing Lack of engagement with the youth in their community

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FNL: COMMUNITY YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

Santa Cruz County Friday Night live Partnership (FNL) is a program that is youth led and driven, designed to prevent alcohol and drug use among youth. The capstone project focused on lack of engagement with youth in the community. This was addressed with a radio public service announcement (PSA). It was focused on a Positive underage drinking campaign done through chapter weekly activities. A radio public service announcement (PSA) was done by the youth to engage with their community. A timeline was calculated that showed the percentages of recruitment before, during, and after the video to show efficacy of the video for increasing youth involvement. The contributing factors for lack of engagement with the youth in their community, are youth being peer pressured to not participate, financial problems, and lack of awareness about out-of-school programs. The consequences are an increase in irresponsible behavior, youth violence/gang activity, alcoholism and drug addiction. The capstone project was designed with weekly agendas that were approved by and edited by the project mentor. Assessment methods used were pre- and post-individual skill assessments to measure the engagement of the youth. The findings on this project showed youth at Watsonville YMCA feel they still need improvement in building confidence in life skills. The recommendations to Friday Night Live when conducting this project is to start early, include extra time in the timeline such as holidays, and youth not attending a meeting as it will delay the timeline.

*Keywords:* Youth, lack of engagement, community, skills

**Agency and Communities served**

Friday Night Live County of Santa Cruz is part of the Department of Health Human Services and Public Policy with Santa Cruz County. The agency's mission is to encourage youth to be leaders in the community and develop healthy relationships in their community to stay away from substance use. According to Friday Night Live website, "Friday Night Live builds partnerships for positive and healthy youth development which engage youth as active leaders and resources in their communities" (2020). Friday Night live offers programs to youth that are youth-led and to inform and provide to the community of the resources to prevent substance use. Friday Night Live is run at schools where youth are recruited and welcomed to join weekly meetings. They are held after school for about an hour and a half. Snacks and rides are provided to youth in all of the programs in order to promote regular attendance. Two other programs that are offered are Youth Council and Youth summit. Youth council consist of youth from all of the school to meet on Fridays and bring ideas and conduct youth-led meetings to help the program. These students are a range of middle schoolers ages 11-13years and High schoolers ages 14-17 years old. Summer summit is a yearly meeting that is held in Disneyland, youth who attend the most meetings are eligible to attend the summer summit with all expenses paid. After the meeting they get to enjoy the amusement park Disneyland. This is put as a reward for the youth to encourage them to attend the meetings. There are also other incentives like stipend and community hours. During the summer the hours that the youth do are compensated with a stipend. These incentives are paid based on the hours they attended.

The community that is being served are the youth, parents, and the community in Santa Cruz county to help promote healthy living within themselves. The program will provide facts and activities that will show the youth what can happen if they use drugs or alcohol. These facts were provided from the statistics of Santa Cruz County. The parents were informed of the dangers of alcohol and drugs that are around their children. It shows parents how easy it is for youth to get alcohol being underage and the statistics of how many parents don't know that their kids have tried alcohol at either parties or in their own home. The parents of Friday Night Live, Santa Cruz County were informed of how prevalent underage drinking is in their community.

### **Problem description**

A problem that needed to be solved is the lack of engagement of youth leaders in the community. Youth are persuaded by their peers and society on a daily basis. Alcohol and drugs have always been a part of trying to stay cool with the youth. They drink to fit socially or to try new things without looking at the consequences. Since it's socially accepted and looked at as cool, youth are less encouraged to attend these kinds of clubs. Not having access to leadership opportunities helps Friday Night Live stand by providing youth led programs/clubs. Without the youth there would not be a Friday Night Live.

### **Contributing factors**

#### ***Youth peer pressure to not participate***

One of the risk factors is youth don't want to look uncool in front of their peers. Youth are under peer pressure to not participate by their peers when it's a prevention program because

they don't consider it cool, this contributes to not becoming youth leaders in their community. According to Child Trends, “In other words, if participating in a certain program, or any program, is seen as “uncool,” youth will be less likely to attend” (2009). Their peers' perception influences their choice in participating in a youth's club. Programs related to school or community have a negative stigma with not being cool. “Tutoring programs were mentioned as a potential source of embarrassment because participation runs the risk of sending a message to peers that the person being tutored is stupid or a “nerd” (Child Trends, 2009, Page 4). Not having youth leaders in their community puts their community at risk because youth follow and influence their peers. Youth leading by example shows their peers and their community that they care about their well-being and their lives. When youth lead these kinds of meetings, they inspire other youth to do better and also be leaders in their community.

### ***Financial problems***

A barrier that can prevent youth from attending after school programs are financial problems. Youth need to go home right after school to take care of their siblings or go to work. “Parents who were at work during out-of-school time hours often relied on their older children to take care of their younger siblings. Other youth used out-of-school time hours to work and supplement household income or earn pocket change” (Child Trends, 2009, Page 3).

### ***Lack of awareness about out-of-school programs***

The lack of awareness about out-of-school programs is another factor that affects the youth joining after school programs. “Participants noted that many children and youth are not

aware of out-of-school time programs in their communities” (Child Trends, 2009, Page 2 ).

There seems not to be as much advertisement and or engagement in out of school programs and the programs end up falling apart. Older participants have said that they don't know about any programs or services available. (Mary Terzian, 2009). Along with the lack of awareness in out of school programs youth are more interested in hand on programs that teach them life skills.

“Among the programs that they knew about and recalled with enthusiasm were those that involved hands-on learning, such as a culinary arts program that teaches students how to cook and a learning center that couple’s academic instruction with a broad array of enrichment activities.” (Child Trends, 2009, Page 2). Implementing what the youth want in programs, preventative, and more advertising will help a program noticed by youth.

## **Consequences**

### ***An increase in alcohol with youth***

One of the consequences of the problem is that there can be an increase in the intake of underage drinking. Youth are more at risk of deaths and overdoses when they are not involved in their community. “According to the 2009 survey, nearly 1/3 of high school seniors report having been drunk and 25% admit to binge drinking, defined for adults as having five or more drinks on one occasion. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, high school students who frequently binge drink are more likely to drive drunk, ride with drunk drivers, not wear seat belts, carry weapons, get into fights and attempt suicide” (Roy-Borstein, 2010, page

3-4). This leads to not enough leaders in the community. Youth that are not equipped with the right tools to be successful are less likely to take leadership roles for change in our community.

### ***Youth violence/gang activity***

Alcohol has been linked with gang activity with youth when not engaged in the community. According to the journal of ethnicity in Substance abuse, results propose that the relationship between gang exposure and adolescent substance use is linked by both access to substances and exposure to violence (Bermea, Autumn M, 2018). Drugs and violence usually go together, when someone is in gangs, they are more prone to be involved in drugs that can lead to violence. “It has also been argued that this involvement in both the gang and the drug trade and drug use increases the potential for violent behavior” (Bjerregaard, 2008, Page 8).

### ***Alcoholism and drug addiction***

Youth who are not involved in the community will have a higher risk of being addicted to drugs and alcohol. Some of the consequences for teens being addicted to drugs and alcohol can stay with them until adulthood. “Continued, drug use can have a serious consequence, not only during adolescence but into adulthood as well” (Carson-DeWitt, Rosalyn, 2003, Page 13). Youth that are addicted to alcohol or drugs have a higher chance of dying than their peers who are not addicted to drugs and alcohol. “The use of alcohol and other drugs is a major cause of teenage deaths, ranging from motor vehicles crashes to homicides to suicides” (Carson-DeWitt, Rosalyn, 2003, Page 16).



### Problem model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Youth being peer pressure to not participate	Lack of engagement with the youth in their community	An increase in irresponsible behavior
Financial problems		Youth violence/gang activity
Lack of awareness about out-of-school programs		Alcoholism and drug addiction

### Scope of Work

A project implemented involved activities for Central Coast YMCA to help youth develop leadership skills in their community. The activities consisted of a weekly agenda to develop leadership skills and encourage youth to take a stand on underage drinking. Before doing an activity with the youth a post survey was done to see the youth's personal interest to find out what motivates them in life. Agendas were implemented to help the youth create an action plan. This will help promote youth leadership, confidence, and goal settings. After the chapter meetings were done a post survey was handed to youth to see if the agenda's helped the youth become more confident in leadership, a better understanding on how they can be involved in the community. After the implementation has successfully taken place the youth will have a higher percentage in reaching their goals in having a successful goal and being successfully independent now and in the future.

It was anticipated that it would take a semester from when the school year started, but reality was based on case to case. The youth worked weekly on agenda's that were created and

edited by the mentor, but youth led. The timeline consisted of a pre individual assessment, five agendas that include project development which was chosen by the youth. The youth chose to work on posters and youth flyers and they also targeted social media. At the end the youth did a post individual skill assessment to get results. They worked twice a week on the agenda to make sure a youth has a clear understanding of the agenda. It includes a pre-facilitation to ensure that the facilitator will have a clear understanding of how to facilitate the chapter meeting on the first meeting and for the second meeting the youth leads the meeting with the group. This ensured that the youth facilitating the meeting had a successful meeting and felt confident leading a meeting on their own.

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/Deadlines
Agenda's	Agenda's Individual skills assessment	November 30/2020

## Capstone project description and justification

### Project purpose

The project purpose is to give tools and confidence to the youth so they can be successfully independent and have the motivation and skill sets to avoid drugs and alcohol. There is a lack of information on drugs and alcohol being distributed to youth which leads to negative consequences. Such as an increase in alcohol use in youth or other severe causes like death. The purpose of this project mainly focused on setting youth for success and engagement in their community. This project also focused on helping youth to better participate without the peer pressure.

### **Project implementation**

The agency has a focus at YMCA Central Coast where the agency goes once a week to implement projects for the youth. This is already something that is being made for the youth to have a better outcome with prevention in alcohol and tobacco use. They are in a program where their mission is to strengthen community through programs that develop youth support and encourage social responsibility. This is also to help them when they are out of High School to be more independent and in hand successful. Access from my agency was used to enter YMCA Central Coast to start on the project.

The youth took a role in participating in helping with this project, mentor and program coordinator. Friday Night Live's mentor took some time to brainstorm some ideas as she has been there for a while and has seen other projects that other interns have done. She has more insight on what could work and what might not work. The program coordinator helped and guided with the capstone project and gave ideas on how it can be improved. A timeline was sketched out for the agendas to see what was needed to do in the last weeks to get the results for the project. The youth's role was to participate and get feedback from them to better help them be successful.

Resources needed to implement this aspiring project are to have a program coordinator with prior work in the community, experience in substance use prevention and intervention, and bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish. Funding will be needed for materials to make packages for the youth. This will help assess them and get them the materials they need. Another

resource that was needed was to have access to chapter agenda's that were needed according to their interest.

### **Assessment plan**

Measurement of the project meets the expected outcomes by reporting them to a system and using youth surveys. Mini Grant deliverables will be measured by data entry guidelines of chapter write ups. Mini grant deliverables are the activities the youth chose to focus on. Youth surveys were sent out to the youth yearly and that feedback will be sent directly to the state and we will get a data score on how the program impacts the youth. These two programs will allow to see how it's impacting the youth and how they feel about Friday Night Live. This will also notify the state how the money is being spent.

### **Expected outcomes**

Some expected outcomes are for youth to stay away from drugs and alcohol and be engaged in the community. This will help youth to be independent after high school and be active members in their community. Youth surveys will be used to determine the benefits of the project and to see how well it's working. This survey will have questions that will be focused to help develop their project to help them succeed in the future. The skill assessment will consist of a pre-and post-assessment to see how the project impacted them to be more active in the community.

### **Project activities**

The program activities that were conducted from the scope of work were the weekly chapter agendas. Weekly agenda for the YMCA Central Coast in Watsonville were created by the intern. Once the agendas were done, they were sent out to the mentor and boss for any edits

and approval to use that agenda for the next week's chapter meeting. Once it's approved, materials get ready and youth are met at the YMCA Central Coast to help a youth facilitate meetings. These activities are used to develop leadership skills and life skills. The program is youth led and project driven. Youth attend regular meetings and assist in coordinating and implementing programs.

### **Project outcomes**

The expected project outcomes that were determined for the youth to achieve success and develop leadership skills to continue in the community, and to encourage youth and promote them to be active leaders in the community. It offers youth to develop leadership, life skills, and to be a part of "Create a positive Social Norms Campaign" that uses positive messaging to promote positive behaviors that reduce underage drinking.

The project aimed to reduce the use of drugs and alcohol in youth. By implementing positive social norms campaigns by completing the following social media activities. The youth developed skills to be engaged in the community by conducting an Underage Drinking Prevention Project where youth will implement a Positive Social Norms Campaign by completing the following activities a video PSA, and parent-targeted posters. An agenda was created that helped the youth understand their project and the development to get to their goal.

### **Project Results**

As a result of the project, it has shown that the youth feel that they still need help with confidence. Two out of six youth rated themselves as confident, one out of six rated themselves as fairly confident, and three out of 6 rated themselves as improving confidence for being an active team member in pre assessment. After the project the youth rated themselves one out of

three as confident, one out of three as fairly confident, and one out of three as improving confidence in being an active team member. Youth rated themselves three out of six for confidence, one out of six for fairly confidence, and two out of six for improving confidence for making decisions as a group. Post the project the youth rated themselves as one out of three for confidence, two out of three for fairly confidence, and zero out of three for making decisions as a group. Youth rated themselves three out of six for feeling confident, two out of six for fairly confident, and one out of six for improving confidence. Post, two out of three for confident, one out of three for fairly confident, and zero out of three for improving confidence for facilitating a group Discussion or Meeting. Two out of six youth rated themselves as confident, one out of six rated themselves as fairly confident, and four out of six rated themselves as improving confidence for actively listening to others. One out of three rated themselves as confident, one out of three rated themselves as fairly confident, and one out of three rated themselves as improving confidence for actively listening to others. Youth rated themselves as two out of six for confident, two out of six for fairly confident, two out of six for improving confidence for conflict resolution skill. Post conflict resolution skills youth rated themselves as one out of three for confident, one out of three for fairly confident, one out of three for improving confidence for conflict resolution skills. Youth rated themselves one out of six as confident, four out of six for fairly confident, and one out of six for improving confidence for understanding environmental prevention. Post understanding environmental prevention youth rated themselves as zero out of three for confidence, three out of three rated themselves as fairly confident, zero out of three rated as improving confidence.

Six out of six are confident, zero out of six feel fairly confident, and zero out of six feel that they need to improve on confidence for accessing my School/Community. Post the youth rated themselves one out of three for confidence, one out of three fairly confident, and one out of three rated themselves as improving confidence in accessing my School/Community. Youth rated themselves zero out of six as confident, one out of fairly confident, and five out of six for improving confidence for knowing how to collect research and collect data. Zero out of three rated themselves as confident, zero out of three rated themselves as fairly confident, and three out of three rated themselves as improving confidence in knowing how to Research and Collect Data. Three out of six rated themselves as confident, one out of six rated themselves as fairly confident, and two out of six rated themselves as improving confidence for knowing how to analyze data. Youth rated themselves post survey and zero out of three for confident, zero out of three out of three rated themselves for fairly confident, and three out of three rated themselves for improving confidence for knowing how to analyze data. Youth rated themselves one out of six for confident, two out of six for fairly confident, and three out of six for improving confidence for problem solving.. Post, youth rated themselves as zero out of three for confident, three out of three fairly confident, and zero out of three for improving confidence for problem solving. Youth rated themselves as one of six as confidence, one of six for fairly confidence, and three out for improved confidence for action plan development. Post youth rated themselves as zero out of three for confidence, three out of three for fairly confidence, and zero out of three as improving confidence for action plan development. Youth rated themselves two out of six for confidence, zero out of six for fairly confidence, and four out of six for improving confidence for planning and organizing my time. Post youth rated themselves as three out of three for confident,

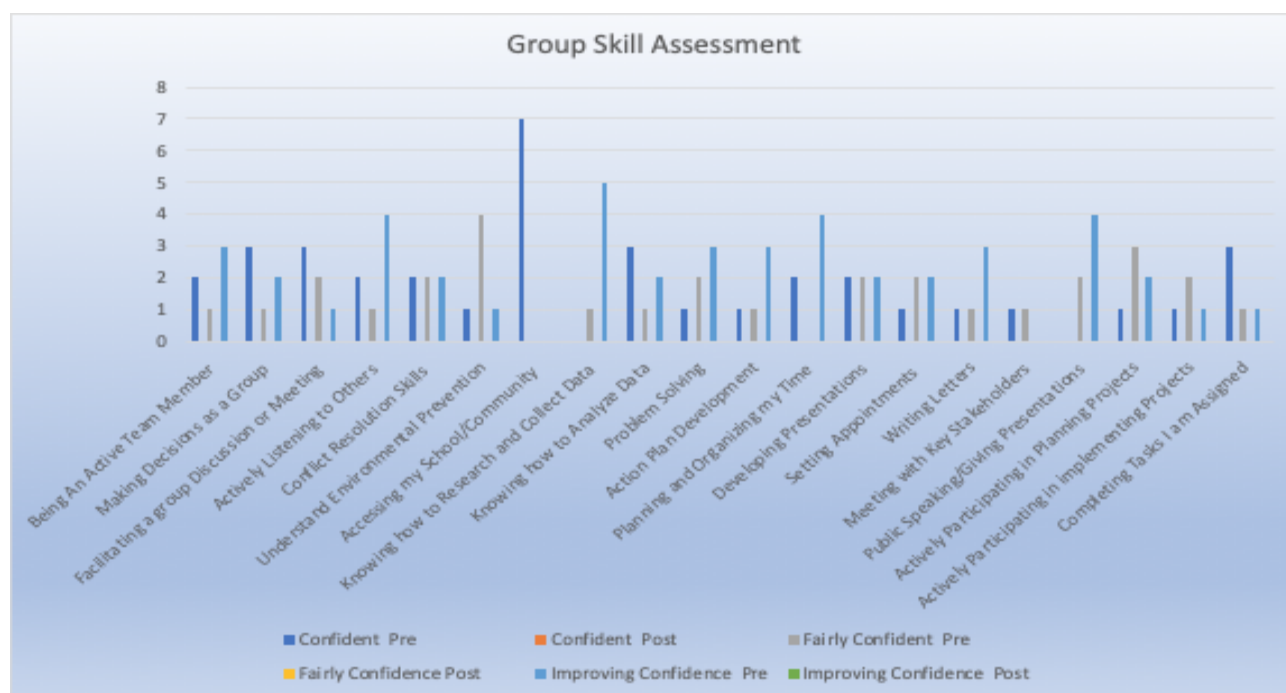
zero out three fairly confident, and zero out of three for improving confidence for planning and Organizing my Time. Youth rated themselves two out of six as confident, two out of six fairly confident, and two out of six improving confidence for developing presentations. Post youth rated themselves three out of three confident, zero out of three as fairly confident, and zero out of three improving confidence in developing presentations. Youth rated themselves one out of six as having confidence, two out of six fairly confident, and two out of six improving confidence for setting appointments. Post, youth rated themselves three out of three confident, zero out of three fairly confident, and zero out of three improving confidence for setting appointments. Youth rated themselves one out of five as confident, two out of five as fairly confident, and two out of five as improving confidence for writing letters. Post youth rated themselves three out of three confident, zero out of three fairly confident, and zero out of three improving confidence for writing letters. Youth rated themselves one out of three for confidence, one out of three fairly confident, and one out of three improving confidence for meeting with Key stakeholders. It was the same results for the post survey for meeting with key stakeholders. Youth rated themselves zero out of six for confident, two out of six for fairly confident, and four out of six for improving confidence in public speaking/giving presentations. Post youth rated themselves one out of three confident, one out of three for fairly confident, and one out of three improving confidence for public Speaking/Giving Presentations. Youth rated themselves one out of six as confident for actively Participating in Planning Projects, three out of six for fairly confidence, and two out of six improving confidence. Post youth rated themselves one out of three confident, two out of three fairly confident, and zero out of three as improving confidence for actively Participating in Planning Projects. Youth rated themselves one out of six for confident, two out of six fairly



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confident, and two out of six improving confidence for actively participating in implementing projects. Post youth rated themselves one out of three confident, one out of three fairly confident, and one out of three for improving confidence in actively Participating in implementing Projects. Youth rated themselves three out of six for confident, one out of six fairly confident, and two out of six improving confidence. Post, youth rated themselves two out of three confident, one out of three fairly confident, and zero out of three improving confidence in completing Tasks I am Assigned. Stated in the chart below shows this information. The outcome measures used to access the effectiveness of the project's progress toward achieving the outcome were not as expected because there was not enough youth to compare the date from when the project was started.



The data collection method used to gather evidence to measure the project outcome was a pre- and post-individual skill assessment. A project was implemented in between to measure the confidence based on the project. The project did not achieve the expected outcomes based on group skills assessment results. The group skills assessment showed that youth still feel that they need to build more confidence in these skills. The project did not achieve the expected outcomes because there might not have been enough time to do more projects to encourage youth to build confidence.

### **Conclusion & Recommendations**

In conclusion based on the results the youth have shown that the youth feel that they still need to build confidence in increasing their skills in the community. The research showed that this project should be continued to be implemented in the future for the agency. The project is aimed to reduce alcohol and drinking among youth, with this project the youth will continue to help prevention in the community. Some recommendations for the agency based on the findings are to start on the project earlier and plan time for holidays and backtracks of any sort. Starting early on the project could have improved the project, if given the chance to redo this project again a suggestion would be to start early could have been done differently would be to start early.

### **Personal Reflection**

I have learned that the lack of engagement in the community needs a lot of work from the community to get the youth engaged and keep engaged. I enjoyed doing this project for my capstone paper. I genuinely enjoyed working with the youth, being able to help them achieve

skills to be engaged in the community to be successful makes me proud. I learned when planning and implementing a project with the youth I have to take in consideration the hiccups along the way. I had to implement extra time on my timeline in case the youth cancel a chapter meeting to be able to complete the project. The project helped the agency in its efforts to address the lack of engagement in the community.

Some successes from the project activities that contributed to the outcome were how the project brought awareness of how their peers in their community were doing with alcohol. This also brought up to the youth that they don't want to go through the alcohol and drugs route and they like being involved in the community to help others not do drugs and alcohol. A limitation we came across when developing the project was when some youth didn't show up to the chapter meeting. This would impact the order of the radio PSA order that was in place prior and we had to improvise and change the order for the recording. If I had an opportunity to give advice to a future capstone student working at my agency or on this project is to start early. When creating the timeline make sure to add extra time in case of cancellations and adjustments to the timeline. Overall, this experience has helped me develop skills such as being a more diligent scholar, more professional, and a better leader.

## Appendix A

### Scope of Work

Activities	Timeline/Deadline	Supporting Staff
Individual Skills Achievement	10/14/20	Brenda (Manager)
Poll the room roadmap 5.3, Urban legends, Perception vs. Reality – CHKs Data	10/21/20	Brenda (Manager)
Project overview and who, what, when Roadmap 6.6	10/28/20	Brenda (Manager)
Tactics, Choose Wisely! – Positive Social Norms Video	11/4/20	Monica (Mentor)
Review Match-Up Activity, Developing our Positive Message/Script, Write Unique Script Draft:	11/11/20	Monica (Mentor)
Look at youth's PSA draft and practice, Practice and Record the video voice over.	11/18/20	Monica (Mentor)
Individual Skills Achievement	11/25/20	Monica (Mentor)

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